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ABSTRACT

This study examines the range of available art criticism formats, assesses the value of accompanying literature descriptions, and provides a conceptual framework for possible curriculum design. Descriptions and analyses are provided of art criticism formats presented in art education literature according to format characteristics, theoretical and research rationales, anticipatory information, types of objects to be studied, and instructional cues. These dimensions, in turn, are referenced to a continuum of educational and philosophical perspectives. Feldman's (1973) four-step format, (description, formal analysis, interpretation, and judgment), traditionally used by art critics, serves as a generalized frame of reference by which 15 other works are compared. Separate sections describe each of the five dimensions, the four steps of Feldman's traditional format, and applications of perceptual and learning theory in art criticism literature. Following a bibliography listing over 40 related references, two figures are provided to aid teachers in selecting a format appropriate to particular contexts and goals. In figure 1, the art criticism formats and their tabulated characteristics are cross-referenced with critical, educational, and philosophical continuum tendencies. In figure 2, critical, educational, and philosophical perspectives of art are listed on parallel continua that extend from an emphasis on external controls to a reliance on internal directives. A five-page bibliography is included. (LH)

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Running head: ART CRITICISM FORMATS

Abstract

In this study, art criticism formats presented in art education literature are described and analyzed according to the following dimensions: format characteristics, theoretical and research rationales, anticipatory information, types of objects to be studied, and instructional cues. These dimensions, in turn, are referenced to a continuum of education and philosophical perspectives and to student readiness levels. The purpose of this descriptive and analytical study is to examine the range of available art criticism formats, to assess the value of their accompanying literature descriptions, and to provide a conceptual framework for possible curriculum decisions.

A Descriptive and Analytical Study of Art Criticism Formats with Implications for Context-Specific Implementation

Increasingly, art educators are proposing that art classes, in addition to studio experiences, provide instruction in art history and art criticism. Commonly known as aesthetic education, this tripartite focus has a history in the literature of art education dating back more than two decades. Although in 1973 Smith noted a climate unfavorable to art criticism instruction inasmuch as it involves an intellectual approach, in 1985 Grieder believes that now "a form of education that is opposed to the intellect is sure to meet opposition or neglect" (p. 7). In addition, serious questions have been raised as to whether art production alone adequately develops aesthetic discriminations, knowledge of art content, and analytical and evaluative skills. Evidence suggests that "typical studio-oriented programs of instruction provide meager factual information about the subject of art and have little influence on student attitudes toward it" (Mittler, 1980, p. 17). However, despite all signs pointing to this as being an auspicious time for art criticism to become part of art curricula, its widespread implementation remains yet to occur.

This author believes that this situation will continue unless there are some changes in how art criticism is presented in the literature. Although there are the much-expected and even healthy disagreements on how to proceed with implementing art criticism instruction, numerous educators have also noticed a deficit in basic information on contending methods and goals. "Although the literature available on the subject is

expansive, it is easy to become disheartened if searching for a clearly delineated, cohesive methodology outlining both principles and procedures of art criticism" (Lankford, 1984, p. 151). Geahigan (1980) notes that the literature on art criticism has "grown in an incremental manner" (p. 64) without critical assessments of its content or value.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a review and analysis of major journal and selected textbook literature on art criticism procedures. In this paper, art criticism formats are delineated and their accompanying literature is assessed as to what has been specified in regard to theoretical and research rationales, anticipatory information, types of objects to be studied, and instructional cues. These five dimensions, in turn, are referenced to educational and philosophical perspectives and to student readiness levels.

This review has been limited primarily to sources in which an art format is outlined in contrast to the many general discussions of art criticism and aesthetic issues. A format is operationally defined as a methodology that consists of specified topics or levels used to guide critical analysis. Although this is essentially a descriptive study involving a literature review and analysis of relevant data, it is also prescriptive in that it reveals the range of available art criticism formats and provides a conceptual framework for possible curriculum decisions. This study attempts to answer the following question: If an art teacher were to read relevant art education literature on art criticism, what information would be found helpful for implementing art criticism instruction?

Defining Art Criticism

Although Ecker (1967, 1973) has suggested that critical analysis occurs through internalized responses to art, for educational purposes, art criticism is a linguistic act that gives an account of responses to and evaluations of art. According to Feldman (1973), art criticism is "more or less informed, and more or less organized, talk about art" (p. 50). Art criticism has also been described as an exploration or as a performance whereby procedures of how to look and concepts of what to look for are discovered and enhanced, in contrast to artistic meaning being a predetermined given, external to one's experience (Smith, 1973; Taunton, 1983).

Silverman (1979) distinguishes between aesthetic perception, as being a matter of perceiving phenomenological qualities, and aesthetic criticism, which requires a background knowledge in historical styles, theories, and functions. In contrast, Mittler (1980, 1982) defines art appreciation as inculcating or requiring specialized knowledge and factual information; art criticism develops critical and evaluative responses that are primarily dependent upon the perceptual characteristics of the object itself. Somewhat differently, Johansen (1979) considers art criticism to involve a theoretical knowing about art; art appreciation involves qualitative knowing. Both Mittler and Johansen, however, consider art criticism to serve as a foundation for appreciation.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to attempt to resolve conflicting definitions of art criticism and art appreciation, although there seems to be some general agreement that factual knowledge about art is of a lower order and that art criticism involves a sensibility

that is dependent on internal cues and what is perceptually present. In addition, art criticism usually involves some type of appraisal that evolves as one describes and analyzes within a specified procedure.

Art Criticism Formats

Art criticism formats have in common a more or less linear step-by-step approach in which steps build upon each other. Undoubtedly, Feldman's method consisting of (1) description, (2) formal analysis, (3) interpretation, and (4) judgment has been the most prominent and thoroughly examined art criticism format in art education. In this paper, these four steps will serve as a generalized frame of reference by which other formats can be compared. Gaitskell and Hurwitz (1958), Hurwitz and Madeja (1977), Mittler (1980), and Smith (1967) use the four steps, with Smith differentiating between those aspects that are exploratory and those that are argumentative. (See Figure 1.) This is not to imply that such use is merely derivative of Feldman's format. The traditional four steps are characteristic of critical thought in general and can be found as critical analysis procedures in any number of disciplines.

Briefly, the description category consists of making, without inferences, an inventory of what is perceptually present. Formal analysis involves an examination of the relationships among design elements. For interpretation, one forms an hypothesis as to how the information in description and analysis are related; interpretation involves a discussion of meanings, themes, and problems solved. Judgment consists of an assessment of value that is based on specified criteria.

Variations on the traditional format consist of suggestions that

judgment be held in abeyance rather than signaling a closure (Barkan & Chapman, 1967). Johansen (1979), with reference to Beardsley and Ingarden, parallels description, interpretation, and evaluation to stages of impression, expression, and commitment, respectively. According to Johansen, when analysis is dealt with separately, it tends to isolate formal qualities from expressive characteristics. Conversely, Madeja (1979) has emphasized the benefits of analysis.[1]

In a brief description of aesthetic criticism, Silverman (1982) collapses analytical and interpretive stages into description. Clements (1979) combines description, analysis, and interpretation. Clements believes that description as a separate step is not only artificial but also deleterious to the goals of art criticism since students tend to over focus on literal qualities anyway. The task is to educate toward higher levels. A specific judgment step, also considered much abused and unnecessary if the other steps are adequately covered, is eliminated in Clement's format.

Perhaps the most striking variations in format are those that allow for the introduction of preliminary information, attitudinal exercises, or anticipatory sets, such as those of Cloud (1982/1983) and Lankford (1984). With reference to learning theory structures and taxonomies, Armstrong and Armstrong (1977) and Hamblen (1984) present formats that parallel Feldman's four steps in substance, although perhaps not in appearance. Emphasizing an interactive questioning methodology, Taunton (1983), specifies eight question categories that loosely resemble Feldman's steps.

On the basis of their formal characteristics, art criticism formats appear to fall generally into the following categories: the traditional

steps of Feldman's method, the deletion of one or more steps of the traditional format, elaborations that include anticipatory or preparatory exercises, and adaptations to learning theory hierarchies. The formal characteristics of a format are its most obvious, public presentation, and there is a tendency to equate form with substance and meaning. The formal characteristics of art formats, however, tell little of how they are to be implemented, only hint at how their authors intended them to be used, and reveal essentially nothing about the range of information presented with the format.

Dimensions of Analysis

As graphically indicated by the controversies and debates sparked by Feldman's method (Geahigan, 1975; Nadaner, 1984), most formats are open to widely divergent interpretations. In fact, perhaps the value of a format following the traditional steps lies in its being amenable to a variety of applications. By the same token, it is doubtful that reference to a format alone without explanatory information or actual experience in using the format will result in its implementation. The format alone only hints at its theoretical rational and at methodologies for implementation and is mute on such issues as the type of objects to be studied and whether its author conducted relevant empirical studies. The purpose of the chart in Figure 1 is to present a summary description and analysis of selected art criticism formats. Literature descriptions accompanying the presentation of an art criticism format were analyzed along five dimensions: theoretical foundations, research foundations, anticipatory set, object of study, and instructional cues.

Insert Figure 1 about here

If a dimension is clearly stated and stressed in the literature, it is checked X. When possible, descriptors, antecedents, or sources are specified. If a dimension's presence is implied, merely mentioned, or requires extensive interpretation, the dimension is indicated by a (X). For example, descriptions of student-teacher dialogues may or may not provide adequate information for classroom implementation. At one point, Feldman (1973) mentions the Socratic questioning method, yet whether a teacher could implement this methodology from his statements is highly doubtful. Some authors devote a phrase to a dimension; others, paragraphs. This writer takes the responsibility for possible misinterpretations made in ascertaining dimensions in the literature reviewed. In areas of uncertainly, however, similar failures might be expected from others who are attempting to utilize this literature.

Philosophical-Educational Continua

The review, analysis, and tabulation of art criticism formats and their characteristics were undertaken to assess the information available to art teachers who might wish to research information on art criticism goals and methodologies. An adjunct purpose has been to aid teachers in selecting a format that might be appropriate to particular contexts and goals. Toward those ends, the formats and their accompanying tabulated characteristics in Figure 1 are cross-referenced with a continuum of philosophical and educational perspectives.

To provide a cross-reference along major educational-philosophical

orientations, a composite of perspectives was necessary. Various options were available. The use of aesthetic theories and perspectives, such as Pepper's (1965) and Abrams' (1953), was rejected on the basis that these need to be translated to and paralleled with educational perspectives. Moreover, as Mittler (1982) has noted, parts of art criticism formats are compatible with different art theoretical positions, i.e., description-imitationalism, analysis-formalism, interpretation-expressionism. In other words, the art criticism format itself fragments when linked to art theories.

Eisner's (1979) educational perspectives, with the exception of technicism, were found to be particularly comprehensive and applicable to a comparison with major philosophical perspectives and Tyler's (1949) tripartite paradigm of instructional focuses. (See Figure 2.) The work of Rice (1977/1978) and Rosen (1968) was helpful in placing educational perspectives in relationship to philosophical orientations. In providing an art education text, Chapman (1978) does not endorse any one approach, but rather presents the steps and applications of four different methods: inductive, deductive, interactive, and empathic. These four categories generally subsume the possible pedagogical types of available art criticism formats. Hutchins' (1985) discussion of instructional styles, as related to Clark and Zimmerman's (1978) levels of student competencies, suggests that a student's readiness level may be prescriptive of the degree of control and structure to be exercised by the teacher.

In Figure 2, art critical, educational, and philosophical perspectives are listed on parallel continua that extend from an

emphasis on external controls on the left to an increasing reliance on internal directives on the right. For example, a low readiness level may require teacher-originated material and a focus on specific objects of study; a high readiness level may indicate that the student will be able to rely more on the internal directives acquired from past art critical experiences. Likewise, philosophically, there is an emphasis on the nature and character of the object, on rational constructs, and on learned traditions among those perspectives on the left. On the right, there is a tendency toward giving credence to variable interpretations resulting from a transaction between self and reality.

Insert Figure 2 about here

It needs to be emphasized that the philosophical-educational perspectives listed in Figure 1 and their parallels to student and teacher behaviors are approximate. Moreover, the art criticism formats are not given precise correlates with philosophical-educational perspectives. The latter are continuum tendencies. In general, those art criticism formats toward the top of the chart tend toward more systematic organization, the teacher's shaping of appropriate responses, and an emphasis on traditional subject matter, such as the study of artistic exemplars. The object of art and its characteristics take precedence. The continuum extends from external directives on the top to internal controls predominating toward the bottom. Toward the lower part of the chart, formats tend toward an emphasis on the subjective responses of students and student selection of procedures and objects to

be studied. The order in which the formats are listed is relative and approximate. The remainder of this paper will be devoted to a discussion of aspects of the chart in Figure 1, such as the dimensions tabulated, and an assessment, in general, of available art criticism options.

Theoretical and Empirical Bases

Lankford (1984) finds that much art criticism fails to be grounded in foundational areas of inquiry so that positions can be evaluated and defended. References to theoretical rationales are often vague and cursory, making it difficult to properly assess the merits and applicability of given art criticism formats. In the art criticism literature reviewed, with the exception of dissertations, Lankford (1984) is unique in that he clearly cites his assumptions and labels them as such. Due to length allowances or perhaps due to the persistent proddings of doctoral committees, authors of dissertations seem to present a fairly comprehensive theoretical and research rationale for their art criticism formats. For example, Cloud (1982/1983) incorporates five aesthetic theories, three learning theories, and eight critical approaches. (Also see Johnson, 1971/1972; Kordich, 1982). Philosophical aesthetics, perceptual theory, and learning theory constitute the major foundational areas referred to in the literature. Anthropological and sociological foundations appear to have had minimal impact.

Philosophical Aesthetic Foundations

Theories of art have been used to form the criteria on which to base judgments (Chapman, 1978; Feldman, 1981) or have served as organizers that provide a focus for the art criticism process itself

(Mittler, 1982). Aesthetic theoretical positions have generally encompassed imitationalism, formalism, expressionism, and instrumentalism. It has been recognized that no one theory will adequately serve as an all-time foundation for art criticism but rather that the character of an art object and the circumstances and purposes of art criticism instruction will dictate which theory or theories will be selected to serve as guidelines. Feldman and Mittler appear to believe that such selections are made relatively objectively and foster the development of art critical skills. Geahigan (1975) argues that these selections and their application are subjective, indicate taste preferences, and are part of a method, rather than skill-producing.

A more pervasive reliance on philosophical aesthetics is evident in discussions on the nature of aesthetic responses, what types of comments are admissible and appropriate in art critical analysis, the criteria that are to be used for judgments, how engaging in art criticism relates to the aesthetic experience, and the actual benefits to be gleaned from engaging in art criticism. In ongoing, often wide-ranging discussions of such issues, it is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain the foundations of specific philosophical-aesthetic theories. Again, a lack of consistency and clear explication in much of the literature thwarts any assurance of classifying particular art criticism formats within a particular perspective. General orientations, however, run throughout the literature. A brief discussion of the four steps of the traditional format will be herein used as a framework to indicate some of the aesthetic perspectives encountered in the literature.

Description

An art criticism description consists of a more or less stable and public inventory of what is perceptually available, although Margolis (1965) questions whether description and interpretation are not both value laden. Phenomenological methodologies, for example, are highly compatible with prohibitions against bringing extra-aesthetic considerations and subjective associations within an art criticism procedure.

Analysis

Just as description is used to present a phenomenological accounting and involves a distancing of self from idiosyncratic concerns, analysis works to promote attention to the qualities of the object per se. Feinstein (1983) refers to this as referential adequacy. Unlike the strong focus on personal development and expression that is evident in studio instruction, one of the major purposes often stated for art criticism is that of weaning the student away from subjective responses and literal meanings (Mittler 1976a). Chapman (1978) cites the following factors that need to be overcome in order to perceive aesthetic qualities: perceptual constancies, stereotypes, lack of background information, and poor conditions for responding to art.

A phenomenological approach wherein the emphasis is on the preconceptual, sensuous immediacy of the object is essentially a precursor or, perhaps, more correctly, an art criticism correlate to the aesthetic experience. Not uncommonly, art criticism procedures are discussed as paralleling the aesthetic experience; social imperatives and subjective associations are to be eschewed in favor of strictly aesthetic properties bracketed from that which is not perceptually

present or qualifies as being within the art context. In such instances, the role of the teacher is to monitor the students' comments and to act as a guide to maintain the aesthetic focus (Johansen, 1979, 1982). In this sense, art criticism gives a structure to the aesthetic experience, and, significantly, is sometimes referred to as aesthetic criticism. The approach is essentially perceptual, with a major goal being to perceive aesthetically (Smith, 1967).

The object possesses qualities, not the viewer in relationship to those qualities. A nonaesthetic statement, indicating inadequate reference, would be "It reminds me of a mosaic we made in art class." A low order aesthetic response would be "The shape is flat and plain." An aesthetically relevant comment would be "It is quiet and peaceful" (Smith, 1967, p. 74). Ultimately, art criticism is nonlinguistic in that the verification is in the perception of such and such qualities.

The analysis step has been the major focus of debate. Analysis in art criticism has tended to mean formal analysis wherein design element relationships are examined to the exclusion of other meanings. "Formalist criticism, commonly used in art classes, . . . restricts itself to formal relations in the work and de-emphasizes the content of the work and its socially-constructed meaning" (Nadaner, 1985, p. 11). A more holistic approach might be preferable in order to capture the unity of aesthetic experience, however, Broudy (1972) believes that an analytical approach is necessary for unsophisticated learners who tend to focus on literal qualities (also see Kordich, 1982).

Interpretation

The manner in which art is to be interpreted opens up a range of aesthetic issues and controversies, an examination of which is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice to say, there are debates over whether it is admissible or even relevant to include the intent of the artist, the object's historical context, its original use and and meaning, or critical comments made by art critics or historians. Particular systems or theories are often used to give a framework to interpretation and to keep the discussion focused on what must be "compatible with the describable properties of the work of art in question" (Margolis, 1965, p. 91). Mittler (1980, 1982) is helpful in separating art criticism, which requires no extrinsic knowledge, from art historical study, which does. Mittler suggests that art criticism be a preliminary to art historical study inasmuch as the latter can provide corroborative evidence for one's art critical judgment.

Judgment

For some authors, the raison d'etre for art criticism is to arrive at a judgment (Ecker, 1967); for others, it is part of the process but not essential (Barkan & Chapman, 1967); and for others, it is a natural outcome of the other steps when they are properly done. According to Feldman (1970, 1981), if the first three steps are done well, one's judgment is essentially a foregone conclusion. Historical, extra-aesthetic knowledge is useful to arrive at a judgment, but not essential.

Ecker (1967) specifies judgments as being based on aesthetic, comparative, or historical criteria. Feldman (1981) and Chapman (1978) refer the reader to aesthetic theories to provide criteria. For example, on the basis of expressionism, a work would be judged on how

well it communicated important ideas and feelings. Johansen's (1982) criteria of unity, complexity, and intensity, adapted from Beardsley, again maintains the focus on referential criteria.

Perceptual Theory Foundations

In contrast to aesthetic foundations, perceptual theory has found much more clear application in art criticism literature. The growing understanding of an art object that occurs as one proceeds through an art criticism format has been paralleled to stages of perceptual development as well as perceptual experiences in general (Madeja, 1979; Mittler, 1976b). For example, Bruner's four stages of discriminate perceptual decision-making is initiated by a cursory primitive scanning, proceeds to a seeking of relevant cues and a tentative categorization, and is confirmed by a final categorization. As a hypothesis-testing, transactional explanation of perception, Bruner's model provides compatible correlates to art criticism formats as well as a theoretical foundation for aesthetic perception itself. As in art criticism, Bruner's perceptual process involves a progression away from merely subjective, cursory responses to greater discriminatory powers that result in a judgment based on evidence that has been examined.

Ecker (1967) differentiates between psychological judgments that are subjective and indicative of unsophisticated responses to art and value judgments that are based on the logical processes and outcomes of art criticism, specified criteria, and referential evidence. The often-stated purpose of art criticism is to develop a perceptual thoroughness with ever greater discriminatory power being called into play so that

aesthetic judgments are informed and can be shared with others.

Learning Theory Foundations

Similarities between the traditional art criticism four-step format and hierarchies of learning and instructional taxonomies have not been overlooked by a number of authors. Hamblen (1984) has developed an art criticism questioning methodology within the framework of Bloom's taxonomy, with further similarities noted to the hierarchies and developmental models of Gagne, Guilford, Harrow, Krathwohl, and Piaget. Armstrong and Armstrong (1977) refer to Gagne's hierarchy of learning, Parsons' analysis of teachers' questions, and Ausubel's use of advanced organizers; Taunton (1984) finds Gallagher and Aschner helpful for shaping questions to be used in art criticism dialogues.

Learning hierarchies not only provide an instructional format but also indicate the patterned progression through which, it is often believed, learners progress over a period of time. Art criticism is often considered an efficacious way in which to develop a greater appreciation and understanding of art, as well as considered to have a validity grounded in the way people perceive and learn. As a function of experience, and to some degree maturation, students move from the simple to the complex, from a level of idiosyncratic and literal responses to art to a sensitivity to art's objecthood and the development of multiple perceptual discriminations. Hamblen (1984), however, cautions that similarities between an art criticism format and a learning hierarchy may merely indicate a pedagogical compatibility that can be profitably combined in an educational system in which there is a familiarity with and receptivity to the use of hierarchical constructs.

Research Bases

Although art education literature contains numerous studies on artistic responses and preferences, few of these have been done specifically for application to art criticism instruction. In the literature reviewed, art criticism formats are most often accompanied by descriptions and discussions of their benefits and purposes. A few, such as Smith (1967), describe the actual implementation of a program, and Mittler (1976a) and Feinstein (1984) have conducted research that has had an impact on the formats and methodologies they propose.

Hollingsworth's (1983) study comparing habituation, counterattitudinal, and art criticism applications and Wilson's (1966/1967) research on aspective responses have important implications for art criticism instruction. A strong empirical base for art criticism, however, has yet to be established. Primarily a conceptual case has been made for the justification of art criticism instruction.

Preliminary Information

Imparting preliminary information or providing psychological exercises to place the student in a right relationship with the art object is an integral part of some formats, such as those of Cloud (1982/1983) and Lankford (1984). In discussing the development of cue search skills by using major theories of art, Mittler (1976b) proposes that students be given information on what to look for in the art object. For Feldman (1973) and Johansen (1979), the art critic needs to possess some technical knowledge; for Johansen, bracketing techniques should also be taught to eliminate "fugitive thoughts, anticipations, and presuppositions about

meaning" (p. 10). In contrast, Ecker (1972) prescribes an inductive approach wherein the work of art is the starting point, and the student is not to enter the art criticism experience with a theory in hand.

Throughout Johansen's (1982) art critical process, the teacher is to engage in a dialogue with the student, shaping and correcting responses so that the student attends to primarily aesthetic qualities. Although this is a fairly common goal in art criticism, the prescribed amount of control to be exercised by the teacher is variable. Preliminary information, psychological exercises, dialogue methodologies, etc., may be used to elicit open-ended, student-originated ideas, or they may be used to sensitively guide the student to predetermined conclusions and outcomes. Those formats tending toward the former approach are located toward the bottom of Figure 1.

Object of Study

The type of art objects suggested for study, who should select objects for study, and who should be relied upon for judgment are some of the strongest indicators of where a format lies on the philosophical-educational continuum. Feldman (1970, 1973) considers art criticism to be a means for students to understand the role art plays throughout their lives, "the meaning of clothing, furniture, domestic architecture, and product design" (1973, p. 55) and to provide the critical skills necessary to combat the invidious effects of the mass media. The assumptive world of the student is also given credence by Lankford (1984) and Mittler (1976a) who stress that background, biases, and abilities must be taken into consideration. Hurwitz and Madeja (1977) believe a phenomenological "insistence upon the total elimination of the extraneous

is understandable for a teacher in the university. Children, on the other hand, are interested in many contexts of art, and to deny this interest may be to withhold information that may be crucial in building and maintaining interest" (p. 14). In contrast, Smith (1967) and Johanson (1982) prescribe that art criticism be applied to exemplars of art in order to develop a cultivated sensibility; what is to be studied should be determined by experts who can recognize aesthetic worth. Hence, these two formats are located toward the top of the chart; the teacher originates curriculum content and maintains strong guidance.

Others, such as Armstrong and Armstrong (1977) and Taunton (1984), apply art questions to the student's own work, which has been the traditional focus for most types of art discussions. Armstrong and Armstrong state as one purpose of art dialogues that of improving the student's confidence and self-image. Ecker (1967) believes the role of art critic is very applicable to the making of art; the critic-teacher is able to "bridge the educational gap between creative or appreciatory experiences in the arts and theoretical or analytical levels of inquiry" (p. 3).

Instructional Cues

Larkford (1984) notes not only the lack of theoretical specificity in the literature, but also the failure "to provide. . . correlative methods[s] for teachers or students of criticism to use" (p. 151) (Also see Kordich 1982; Madeja, 1979). This is certainly the most troublesome deficit in art criticism literature and probably the one which has the most potent influence on the state of art criticism instruction implementation.

Although an art criticism format itself may be considered a

methodology, more specificity than a mere iteration of procedural steps is necessary for implementation. Smith (1967) describes the implementation of a program, and Gaitskell and Hurwitz (1958), Johansen (1982), and Taunton (1983) give examples of student-teacher dialogue. Hamblen (1984) proposes an art criticism format based on Bloom's taxonomy that a teacher can use to generate questions in each of the steps. In proposing a questioning strategy, Armstrong and Armstrong (1977) point out the need for teacher training and practice which goes beyond a mere familiarity with the benefits of asking well-constructed questions that tap higher cognitive levels of thinking. To this extent, adequate literature on art criticism is an essential, but only first, step toward implementation.

Other Formats and Frames of Reference

Although the focus of this paper is on specifically art criticism methods, there are other formats that provide valuable experiences in exploring the meanings of art. Broudy's (1972) four-part perceptual approach has found widespread use in art education programs, the most notable being that of the Getty Education Institutes (Greer & Rush, 1985). Sometimes called aesthetic scanning, Broudy's format consists of exploring sensory qualities, formal relacionships, expressive meanings, and technical properties. Although judgment is not included, according to Madeja (1979), Broudy's work appears to place value upon it. For Broudy, the emphasis is on perceiving aesthetically, i.e., those qualities particular to the art object itself. Therefore, the nonspecialist can learn to perceive in such a manner since no particular art historical or theoretical knowledge is necessary.

Based on Ackerman's four categories of technique, form, subject, and feeling, Gaitskell and Hurwitz (1958) propose a discovery, inductive method for art discussions, wherein children's comments are categorized into the areas of materials, subject, meaning, form, and style. Eisner (1979) discusses the critical aspects of artistic learning that encompasses feelings toward the object, its formal and symbolic qualities, its theme and materials, and the artistic tradition to which it belongs. In regard to art appreciation, Hurwitz and Madeja (1977) discuss phenomenological, associative, and multisensory approaches.

In this author's opinion, some of the strongest rationales for art criticism are presented by those who do not specify a format, but rather present what might be more rightly called a frame of reference. For example, Nadaner (1984, 1985) presents a strong case for the inclusion of social and subjectively constructed meanings, which are conspicuously absent from most art critical analyses. Nadaner (1985) advocates two types of criticism. Historical criticism which "attends to the 'world views' of the observer at a specific moment in history under specific social conditions, [and] semiotic criticism [which] attends to the 'cultural codes' used by observers to understand signs in a visual work" (p. 11). Paradoxically, what this and other such frames of reference offer in richness of perspective, since they are not circumscribed by a step-by-step format, is offset by their lack of a specific procedure for implementation.

Summary

In response to the original question of what an art teacher would find in the art criticism literature reviewed, one can answer as

follows. There is much discussion of aesthetic concerns, but few specific relationships made to foundational origins, let alone appropriate educational applications. Art criticism formats are presented with little specific information on their intended audiences or specific methodologies for implementation. For these reasons, one is hard-pressed to link formats with particular educational goals, and this author has had to deal primarily with general tendencies.

There is much in the literature on the benefits of art critical study, ranging from the intrinsic value of art study to statements on the social benefits of an aesthetically enlightened populace, with all shades of cognitive development and visual literacy benefits in between. For this paper, an original intent to classify formats along a continuum of stated goals was abandoned;[2] art criticism proponents appear to be following in the footsteps of their studio proponent predecessors, often extolling the full gamut of possible benefits of art study. Such optimism is often accompanied by an inconsistency between stated goals and recommended methodologies. As Geahigan (1980) points out, there needs to be a more clearly delineated interface between methodology and the capabilities of the student population and "how efficiently a given method works in enabling a population to reach a given goal" (p. 64).

Despite questions of whether judgment should be the focus of art criticism or whether the popular arts are appropriate for study or a hundred other relevant issues, art criticism has, perhaps, the potential for being the most clear-cut instructional area of the aesthetic education model. No other area has an instructional format integral to its being. This potential for clarity, however, needs to be capitalized upon in the

literature. In adjunct to the types of discussions that now exist, it is herein proposed that authors also need to mention their theoretical bases, relevant empirical studies, teaching methodologies, and how their methodologies relate to their goals. The lack of assurance experienced by this author in classifying current art criticism formats can be expected to have its counterpoint in an uncertainty of how art criticism is to be implemented.

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Footnotes

[1] No attempt has been made to assess different formats presented by individual scholars throughout their careers. Comments by a few scholars, such as Ecker (1967, 1972) and Margolis (1965), are included, although in the literature reviewed they have not recommended a specific art criticism format.

[2] A continuum of art criticism goals, extending from an emphasis on the external object to the actions and life world of the student, would consist of: (a) perception and experience of art object, (b) development of art critical skills, (c) cognitive development, (d) attitudinal changes--increase of preferences, (e) social awareness and change, and (f) improvement of self-concept.

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CONTINUUM TENDENCIES

Academic Rationalism—Cognitive Processes—Social Adaptation—Personal Relevance

Realism—Idealism—Pragmatism—Existentialism

Subject—Society—Student

Law—(Student Readiness)—High

Teacher Originated—Student Originated

Inductive——Deductive——Interactive (Group)——Empathic

		Theoretical Rationale	Research Base	Anticipatory Set	Object of Study	Instructional Cues
Smith (1967; 1973)	Exploratory Description Analysis Interpretation Argumentative Evaluation	X	(X)	X	exemplars	X
Johanson (1982)	Impression Expression Commitment	Beardsley, Ingarden		X	exemplars	(X)
Hamblen (1984)	Knowledge Comprehension Application Analysis Synthesis Evaluation	Bloom			(X)	X
Clements (1979)	Analyze Hypothesize Confirm	(Inductive)				
Silverman (1982)	Historical Perspective Description Judgment					
Mittler (1976c, 1976b, 1980, 1982)	Description Analysis Interpretation Judgment	Bruner	X	(X)		X
Madeja (1979)	Perception Description Analysis Judgment	Arnheim				
Hurwitz & Madeja (1977)	Description Analysis Interpretation Assessment	(X)		(X)		(X)
Gaitskell & Hurwitz (1958)	Description Formal Analysis Interpretation Judgment					(X)
Barkan & Chapman (1967)	Description Interpretation Explanation Judgment (tentative)	X			all types	X
Feldman (1970, 1981)	Description Formal Analysis Interpretation Judgment	X		(X)	all types	(X)
Armstrong & Armstrong (1977)	Informational Leading Synthesizing	Ausubel, Gagne, Parsons			student work	X
Feinstein (1983, 1984)	Description Analysis Metaphoric Interpretation Evaluation Preference	Langer	X	X		X
Taunton (1983, 1984)	Visual Qualities Choices Idea Sources Idea Elaboration Choice-Idea Relationships Intentions and Efforts Flexibility and Curiosity Evaluation	Gallagher & Aschner			student work & other	X
Cloud (1982/1983)	Preanalysis Introduction by teacher Impression by student Analysis Description Interpretation Evaluation	Piaget, Skinner, Thelen & Plato; Feldman, Martin & Jacobus, Mayhew, Reimer, Rice	X	X		X
Lankford (1984)	Receptiveness Orienting Bracketing Interpretive Analysis Synthesis	Kaelin, Merleau-Ponty		X		X

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Chapman (1978)	ART CRITICAL Inductive Perceive/ Describe Interpret Judge		Deductive Hypothesize Interpret Judge	Interactive Perceive/ Describe Interpret Consensus	Empathic Perceive Form Analogies Use Associations Act Out Judge
Eisner (1979)	EDUCATIONAL Curriculum as Technology	Academic Rationalism	Cognitive Processes	Social Adaptation & Reconstruction	Personal Relevance
Rice (1977/1978)	ART CRITICAL Object		Milieu		Interconnections
	EDUCATIONAL Hierarchical, Discipline-Centered		Holistic, Process-Centered		Arbitration, Heuristic-Centered
Rosen (1968)	PHILOSOPHICAL Idealism	Realism	Perennialism	Pragmatism	Existentialism
Tyler (1949)	EDUCATIONAL Subject		Society		Student
	← (from external controls to internal directives) →				

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Art Criticism Formats Cross-Referenced with Art Critical, Educational, and Philosophical Continuum Tendencies.

Figure 2. Art Critical, Educational, and Philosophical Continuum Tendencies.